



from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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EOC recommends “shared services” approach to meet long-term needs of students and schools

EDITOR’S NOTE: The EOC held a full meeting December 12, 2005, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 433, Blatt Building. Recommendations to the budget were made at this meeting.

Columbia – South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) members presented their budget recommendations for the 2006-07 fiscal year today, including proposing new initiatives which target technical assistance in schools having an absolute rating of *Below Average* and *Unsatisfactory*, teacher retention and quality, student healthcare, and support for non-profit organizations providing support to public schools.

Committee members recommended an increase of \$39 million in Education Improvement Act (EIA) programs that reward schools making significant progress and provide resources to underperforming schools. Over 25 percent of South Carolina schools (287 of 1109) received an absolute rating of *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* on the 2005 School Report Cards. The EOC found that 84 percent of these underperforming schools have been identified with some form of state technical assistance since 2001.

“We must address the technical assistance program in a way that recognizes the reasonable limits on state-delivered assistance and builds local capacity,” stated Bob Staton, EOC’s Chairman. “These schools face chronic challenges. We have the data to identify their greatest needs and we must provide support for local initiatives and long-term remedies to improve student achievement.”

Highlights of the proposal, which now heads to the General Assembly and the Governor for consideration during next year’s legislative session, include:

- **Teacher Incentives.** Providing teachers having an advanced degree and teaching in a school with an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average* a \$2,000 increase in salary for teaching in the school one year; \$3,000 for teaching the second year in the same school; and \$5,000 for the third and all subsequent years in the same school.
- **Health / Dental Screening.** In collaboration with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), schools with an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory* would receive extensive health and dental screenings along with the provision of services as needed.
- **Young Adult Education.** The committee approved an increase in funding for Young Adult Education, targeting parents who do not have a high school diploma or GED and who have children enrolled in underperforming schools.
- **Technical Assistance.** A minimum allocation of \$250,000 would be given to schools with an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory*. Schools with an absolute rating of *Below Average* would receive a minimum allocation of \$75,000. Additional funds are recommended for these schools based on their enrollment. All funds would be expended on activities outlined in each school's renewal plan and the allocation would be maintained for at least three years in order to give schools adequate resources to make structural and institutional changes.
- **Communities.** To build local capacity and support for public schools, a grant program would be established which will provide up to \$3,000 in start-up or expansion funds to non-profit organizations that address the education, health, and social services needs of local communities.

“Bringing about real change for these students and schools requires a concerted effort from communities and all areas of government to take ownership in the education challenges that we face,” stated Jo Anne Anderson, EOC Executive Director. “Through shared responsibilities and services, South Carolinians working at state and community levels can create conditions in which all of South Carolina’s students can achieve successfully at high academic levels.”

Also included within the committee’s recommendations are proposals to reward schools making significant progress, including:

- Full funding of the Gifted and Talented Program
- Funding for vocational education exams, which will allow more students to be certified in a vocation.
- Maintaining the average teacher salary at \$43,991, or \$300 above the southeastern average teacher salary.
- Funding for formative assessment for all students in grades 3 through 8.
- Increasing funding for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Program, which recognizes schools for exemplary performance.

Established by the EAA, the EOC is an independent, non-partisan, 18-member legislative committee made up of educators, business persons, and elected officials who serve by virtue of their elected position or by appointment of the legislature or governor. It bears responsibilities for the development and improvement of SC's educational accountability system and for making recommendations to ensure the continuous improvement of schools.

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